



# INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR WOMEN IN MARITIME : 18th MAY

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IT IS NOW OFFICIAL !

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted the 18th day of May of every year as the International Day for Women in the Maritime Sector. A day to celebrate value and render a vibrant acknowlagment to women who endavor in the maritime sector the daily basis, and furthermore encourage those who are still dragging their legs behind or hasitated to join the crew in a sector dominated by men. Only 2% of women are represented.

In order to strengthen its commitment and efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5 on gender equality) and Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8 on decent work for all), and to support all work aimed at remedying the gender inequalities strongly embedded in this sector, IMO adopted in November 2021, during the 32nd session of its Assembly, the day of May 18 as the International Day for Women in the Maritime Sector.

For its first edition on May 18th, 2022, IMO will be organizing an international symposium on the theme: "TRAINING - VISIBILITY - RECOGNITION: SUPPORTING A BARRIER-FREE WORKING ENVIRONMENT".

This symposium will focus on the need to train women, render them more visible in the maritime sector, promote and foster their recruitment, their stability and sustainable employment in the sector; promote the integration of women in the maritime community, in the vessel crew and more at the decision-making level.

This symposium will also address the issue of skills development for women in the maritime sector. It is good to know that they are an integral part of the maritime sector workforce and they contribute to the success of maritime companies, ports, etc.

For the beauty of this grand opening ball, IMO invites all women in the maritime sector to share their various experiences on social medias, such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. Same goes to CEOs, entrepreneurs leaders who are called upon to share their pictures and experiences with women in the maritime sector sharing and enhancing their daily professional lives.

All IMO Member States, maritime industries, associations, maritime community, in short, all the actors of the maritime sector are invited and requested to promote and celebrate the International Day for Women in Maritime, in an appropriate and meaningful way.

In response to this vibrant call, the Continental President of WIMAFRICA (African Women In Maritime) Mrs. ADANLETE LAWSON Akuélé Yevona, invites all the WIMA presidents of each country, in commemoration of this day, to carry out actions to promote capacity building, entrepreneurship, employment and empowerment of women in all areas of the maritime and port sector.

Yes ladies, yes sisters, it is worth noting that we have value, we are highly honoured. The ball is now in our court and it is in our interest not to send it to the grand stands.

Yes ladies, yes sisters, LET'S RISE, LET'S DARE. Shipping is not only a men's business. The maritime field must come out of its lethargy. It is true that the sea is a hostile environment, full of risks, but thanks to scientific, technological and technical developments, no muscle is needed to work on board a ship. One can clearly see that is not just a matter of men. Likewise, outside the ship, on land and on the administrative level, women should be represented at the decision-making level.

To achieve this, training in the maritime field is essential, it is fundamental. But only, it is very expensive. This can justify, apart from prejudices, the very low rate of women in this sector. Some traditionalist minds in Africa think that it is better to pay a lot of money for the education of a boy than for a girl.

So, I lay whole on this opportunity to launch a vibrant, a strong appeal to Cameroonian leaders. It is urgent that the State proceeds to the creation of a National School essentially devoted to maritime and port issues; which school must be in partnership with Centers in Europe such as the Center of Maritime and Oceanic Law (CDMO) of the University of Nantes in France which delivers European diplomas. It is certainly true that the University Institute of Technology (IUT) as well as many other private institutes, offer training in this field, but I believe that this is not enough. The creation and the implementation of this National School purely committed to the maritime sector is necessary for at least two (02) main reasons:

(i) Not only students will no longer have to cross the borders in order to be trained in the maritime field,

(ii) But also for the students will be empowered or fit to face the challenges of international competitiveness.

Following the training, I hope that companies will have more trust in women, that so as to promote equal opportunities to them as for men, with regards to positioning, experience and skills when recruiting. They will be recruited in the same way as men, their treatment within the company will be equal to that of men. By so doing, the company will be creating a more fulfilling working environment for all, more conducive working environment, a working environment free of obstacles.

This is my pleading on the occasion of the first International Women's Day in the maritime sector.